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Seventy-first year

Letter dated 29 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Regarding the joint letter of the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council dated 15 December 2015 (A/70/623-S/2015/988), I have the honour to send herewith a letter from the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic presenting the candidature of Mr. António Guterres for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations (see annex).

I request that you kindly circulate this letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 120, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alvaro Mendonça e **Moura**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 29 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Letter dated 29 February 2016 from the Prime Minister of Portugal addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

The Government of Portugal thanks you for your letter of 15 December 2015 concerning the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General of the United Nations and wishes to contribute to this vital endeavour.

Portugal fully agrees that the position of Secretary-General is of the greatest importance, requiring the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, as well as a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We also agree that it is indispensable for candidates to have previously demonstrated leadership and managerial abilities as well as an extensive experience in international relations and strong diplomatic, communication and multilingual skills.

It is for these reasons that Portugal wishes to present the candidature of Mr. António Guterres for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations. The presentation of this candidature is based on the firm conviction that Mr. Guterres fully meets all of these criteria and that his experience, notably as Prime Minister of Portugal (1995-2002) and then as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2005-2015), a responsibility that he bore for two consecutive terms of office, render him particularly well suited for the unique responsibilities of Secretary-General. Allow me to draw particular attention to his work as High Commissioner and the ability — widely recognized — that he demonstrated in dealing with critical and challenging problems threatening world peace and security, undermining the safeguarding of human rights and compromising sustainable development. Throughout his tenure he showed exemplary understanding of and respect for the values of the United Nations, and extensive international experience which is highly relevant to the pursuit of the Organization's objectives.

During the ten and a half years of his mandate as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees he maintained excellent cooperation with Member States and developed strong partnerships with civil society and the private sector. At the same time, the Office of the High Commissioner went through a period of continuous and intense reform and innovation, allowing it to triple its annual activities, increase its efficiency in delivery and coordination, and reduce to an unprecedented extent the burden of its structural and administrative costs, thus placing the focus of its resources on people in need. Throughout the mandate of Mr. Guterres, the organization gave special attention to the protection and empowerment of women and girls, as well as to the promotion of gender parity in its workforce.

In presenting this candidature, the Government of Portugal is also mindful of the other aspects referred to in your joint letter, specifically the opportunities that

will be offered to the candidates for interaction with members of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, which we very much welcome.

Let me assure you that the presentation of this candidature is also motivated by Portugal's desire to contribute to the process of selecting the next Secretary-General, enriching the choice offered to the relevant United Nations bodies and ensuring a swift and smooth appointment of the future incumbent, through the presentation of an outstandingly capable and experienced individual who has repeatedly demonstrated his leadership and commitment to the objectives of the United Nations and to effective multilateralism.

(*Signed*) António **Costa**
Prime Minister

Enclosure

António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres

António Guterres served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to December 2015, heading one of the world's foremost humanitarian organizations with nearly 10,000 staff working in 125 countries.

During his tenure, he oversaw a profound structural reform of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), reducing staff in its Geneva headquarters by over 20 per cent and increasing the organization's cost effectiveness and emergency response capacity. The volume of activities of UNHCR tripled during his time in office, following the introduction of a needs-based budgeting approach and an increase in the number of people displaced by conflict and persecution, from 38 million in 2005 to over 60 million in 2015. The tenure of Mr. Guterres was marked by some of the largest displacement crises in decades, particularly conflicts in Syria and Iraq, but also the crises in South Sudan, the Central African Republic or Yemen.

Before joining UNHCR, Mr. Guterres spent more than 20 years in government and public service. He served as prime minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002, during which time he was heavily involved in the international effort to resolve the crisis in East Timor. As president of the European Council early in 2000, he led the adoption of the "Lisbon Agenda" and co-chaired the first European Union-Africa summit. He was a member of the Portuguese Council of State from 1991 to 2002. Mr. Guterres was elected to the Portuguese Parliament in 1976, where he served as a member for 17 years. During that time, he chaired the Parliamentary Committee for Economy, Finance and Planning, and later the Parliamentary Committee for Territorial Administration, Municipalities and Environment. He was also leader of his party's parliamentary group. From 1981 to 1983, Mr. Guterres was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, during which time he was also elected as chairman of the Committee on Demography, Migration and Refugees.

For many years Mr. Guterres was active in the Socialist International, a worldwide organization of social democratic political parties. He was the group's vice-president from 1992 to 1999, co-chairing the African Committee and later the Development Committee. He served as President of the Socialist International from 1999 until mid-2005. In addition, he founded the Portuguese Refugee Council as well as the Portuguese Consumers Association, DECO, and served as president of the Centro de Acção Social Universitário, an association carrying out social development projects in poor neighbourhoods of Lisbon, in the early 1970s.

Mr. Guterres is a member of the Club of Madrid, a leadership alliance of democratic former presidents and prime ministers from around the world.

Mr. Guterres was born in Lisbon in 1949 and graduated from the Instituto Superior Técnico with a degree in engineering. He is fluent in Portuguese, English, French and Spanish.